CHAPTER - 3

Radio Plays and NPPs: Some Principles

The radio medium has a long and distinguished history of turning thoughts, words and actions into satisfying pictures within the listener's mind by using the techniques of drama. But there is no need for the producer to think only in terms of the definite kind of play – the principles of radio drama apply to the well-made commercial, a programme trail, dramatised reading, serial plays or plays of certain duration, say, 30 minute or upto 60 minute as usually being done for the NPPs or even five minute serial or two - minute teaching point in a programme for schools or for other target audiences. Since the size and scope of the pictures created are limited only by the minds which devise and interpret them, the medium in its relationship to drama is very unique being presented with the effective simplicity of the use of sound effect alone.

The radio play is the life of the radio today. The playwright of radio play should have knowledge of play writing; but creating the radio play presents some problems. Till today, only a few noted writers have been attracted to the radio and all of them can not be expected to create outstanding radio plays for the air including in the field of NPPs. The radio play has not yet been considered a serious literary form. Conditions must be changed before great writers will undertake the work. In the first place, they must be speedy producers, for they must write a new play each week or month. In the second place, the radio play must be written right the first time for there is no opportunity for a tryout and revision on the road before the first night opening. The radio play has only a first night. The play cannot be changed after its presentation. Furthermore, there are no months of rehearsal during which the play can be perfected. Seldom is the name of the radio author announced; he acquires little fame or recognition by dramatic critics. There are no adequate royalties to enrich the author of the radio play. He is paid only for his manuscript, and upto
the present time, the remuneration is decidedly small. Moreover, they have to study the peculiar script requirement of the radio play.

While it is generally said that the radio playwright is writing for an audience that is blind, in reality he is writing for an audience that has mental images built upon remembrances of scenes and experiences which help it to visualize and create scenery. The writer must appeal to the “eye of the mind”, and create sound pictures that may be even more vivid than the visual ones of the stage. He must write for an armchair audience instead of for a theatre filled with people who are keyed up to the right mood to receive his play. He must create an attitude, an atmosphere, which the theatre has created for its audience. Allowing the audience greater freedom in the mental pictures of characters and of setting possibly will make the play more vivid for the listener, for he can pick out his ideal heroine and place the scene in a location with which he is familiar.¹

A story can offer a framework for the understanding – or at least an interpretation – of life’s events. Often a mirror in which we can see ourselves – our actions, motives, and faults – and the outcomes and results can contribute to our own learning. Radio drama including Hindi NPP is about conflict and resolution, relationships and feelings and people being motivated by them, both driving and driven by events. What happens should be credible, the people believable, and the ending have a sense of logic, however, unusual and curious so that the listener does not feel cheated or let down.

The aim with all dramatic writing is for the original ideas to be re-created in the listener’s mind and since the end result occurs purely within the imagination, there are few limitations of size, reality, place, mood, time or speed of transition. Unlike the visual arts where the scenery is provided directly, the listener to radio supplies his own mental images in response to the information he is given. If the ‘signposts’ are too few or of the wrong kind, the listener becomes disorientated and cannot follow what is happening. If there are too many the result is likely to be

¹ Abbot, Waldo: Handbook of Broadcasting, P. 104
obvious and 'corny'. Neither will satisfy. The writer must, therefore, be especially sensitive to how his audience is likely to react and since the individual images may stem largely from personal experience, of which the writer, of course, knows nothing, this is not easy. But it is the ageless art of the storyteller—saying enough to allow listeners to follow the thread but not so much that they do not want to know what is to happen next or cannot make their own contribution.

The writer must have a thorough understanding of the medium and the production process, while the producer needs a firm grasp of the writing requirements. If they are not one and the same person, there must be a strong collaboration. There can be no isolation, but if there is to be a dividing line, let the writer put everything down knowing how it is to sound, while the producer turns this into the reality of a broadcast knowing how it is to be 'seen' in the mind's eye.

The component parts with which both are working are speech, music, sound effects, and silence.

The Idea: Plot

People go to the theatre because it is a land of make-believe. It contains the relief of romance, the familiarity of realism, the thrill of adventure. The radio audience does not, however, want stark reality, does not care for dull, brutal, and tragic things. The radio NPP is truly a form of relaxation; yet the characters must be intensely human and recognizable in order to appeal to the recollection and visual image created by the listener. The plot of the etherized play should deal with human interests and mental conflict and yet have adequate action. It should be simple, not metaphysical. Melodrama is decidedly popular because it appeals to intense emotion and presents thrills, but these qualities must not be impossible for the radio listener to conceive. While melodrama is a popular radio form, it must be somewhat Victorian in character, for the unseen audience will not permit the air to be polluted by profanity or suggestiveness. The most modest of Broadway plays would have to be expurgated before it could be sent into the pure country air.
The theatre has certain requirements for its plays. The unity of action has been discarded by the radio; the sound effect of a train carries the action from coast to coast; a boat whistle or an airplane motor transports the scene to foreign ports. The unity of time has no place in radio, where “Time Marches On” or fades back. Unities of character and plot are observed because the radio audience is interested in people represented by their voices. Gossip proves that we are interested in people who do things. Front page news of the newspapers deals with the conflicts of individuals with other persons, the elements, or natural obstacles. We are more interested in a sergeant who captures a squad of enemy than in the regiment that invades enemy territory because we can put ourselves in the place of the sergeant. It is hard to feel like an army. Of course, the character must live an eventful life, have adventures that we listeners envy or are thrilled by. These conflicts or adventures in radio are better created by persons than by things. A man with his dog team might fight the elements to deliver serum to a snowbound village in the northland and create a conflict with adequate suspense, but in radio this would result in pure monologue description, not dramatics.

Radio drama is inclined to be suggestive; that is, it suggests a play which is in reality acted in the mind of the listener. The author gives adequate hints and situations; the plot-conscious listener builds his own play. He is led to the desired climax by the author but is pleased by his own mind creation. Of course, the plot must not be too obvious; there must be conflict, a struggle between characters or between characters and a situation. The climax may be unexpected – indeed, the listener is pleased by the surprise ending.

While no dogmatic instructions can be laid down for the selection of a plot for the radio play or NPR, certain factors should be kept in mind by the author. While the audience is not attracted by the drama designed to teach, it does prefer a plot that develops an idea. The more universal the theme, the greater will be the audience. The plot with the greatest appeal is the one that touches the interests, the experiences of the greatest number of listeners. The first thing to do, then, in writing a radio play is to study the lives of those who will constitute the audience. It is
necessary to find what there is in their lives that may form the basis for a conflict and accordingly to develop the playwright's ability to write dialogue by listening to the conversation of those about themselves. Where one finds a human being he finds material for drama. The fact that most lives seem rather commonplace is no deterrent. Simplicity and catholicity of appeal have never been known to constitute a condemnation of a plot. Into the simplicity of the average life one's imagination can insert a logical, a possible conflict. The radio audience assists one as a playwright by preferring stories with Indian or American characters, heroes and heroines in the middle class socially. A good script of NPP has purpose and familiarity - purpose to justify listening, familiarity to make it ring true. The radio requires simplicity, which has nothing to do with the intellectual level of the audience but rather is the result of the limitations of the single-sense appeal. The NPP like any other play must be directly communicable and easily assimilated.

On examination of the plot types that are popular for radio plays, however, one finds that the tendency is toward the thriller play, such as detective stories, spy dramas, ghost stories, and tales of the Wild West. Even the historical plays that are popular are filled with excitement and thrills. Many programmes are devoted to adaptation of stage plays and novels such as those of Dumas. If it were not for the limitation of copyrights, the short stories of O. Henry and Bret Harte would make excellent radio plays. Sex plots are dangerous, and the major networks have refused to present political sketches to be used as a part of a political campaign.

According to Arthur Pryor, dramatic director of the "March of Time", the formula for the play is the setting of problem—explanation of factors involved: conflict, and solution. The ideal radio drama would be one in which the action is purely psychological and where the actors would have to do little or no moving about. The drama itself would run on the pure current of emotion and sentiment and passion. These feelings would be registered in the tone color of the voices speaking the lines.
Because of its brevity, the radio play including NPP should not contain too many scenes that cause confusing transitions, or have too many acts. There are, however, no positive rules for the writing of a successful NPP or radio play. If there were, how could one explain the success of two such dissimilar radio plays as Cartwheel by Vic Knight and Man with a Gun by Charles Vanda and Russ Johnston, both produced by the Columbia Workshop in recent years? In 14 minutes of playing time the former introduces 22 scenes using 34 characters. Man with a Gun is equally unorthodox, being a monologue in five or six scenes. And yet the dramatic effects of both plays are identical. Each scene should be concisely set so that the audience will have a clear understanding of the action that is to transpire. Each scene should carry the plot forward and be essential to its development; otherwise the time requirement would demand its elimination. No scene should run longer than 3 minutes without the entrance of a new character or a new element in the plot. With a series of scene shifts it is essential that we do not allow the characters to increase in number and complicate the play even more. The problem may be brought out in the first scene. Each of the developing scenes should create or remove obstacles, and the final scene should solve the problem. There should be no change of scene that is not clearly accounted for in the action of the play or in the lines.

There are six methods for changing scenes in a dramatic programme—silence, fade, narration, sound effects, musical interlude, and a single musical tone that is amplified and perhaps distorted through echo chambers and filter microphones, and then allowed to die away as the next scene begins. Each method has its drawbacks. The average scene transition requires from 10 to 15 seconds, and listeners lose interest if that much dead air intervenes frequently between scenes. The voice fade sounds forced; it takes away from the naturalness, from the reality of the play. Sound effects are apt to become monotonous; in any case, they must be always easily recognizable. Narration breaks the spell of the drama. Music is often complicated and may spoil a simple play, and suitable music is difficult to find.1

1. Abbot, Waldo: Handbook of Broadcasting, P-106
Naturally, there must be obstacles in the radio play, but subplots are dangerous for they create too complicated a plot for the radio audience to follow. The radio audience requires logical development with an explanation of just how things happen. It must not be left in the dark. Minor details, if of value, must be made clear.

Probably the NPP being radio drama has a greater opportunity to create suspense in its unseeing audience than the legitimate stage play. A shot followed by a scream gains suspense because the audience is not aware of what has happened until it is told. The element of suspense is as vital to the play as is characterization or climax. Of course, everything must lead up to this climax, which must not come until the very end of the programme. There is no opportunity for anticlimax in the play itself.

A tragic or unhappy ending may be satisfactory if a moral can be deduced. The ending of the play must satisfactorily bring the play to a close, all problems solved, all characters accounted for. The adult audience is not critical unless something that is expected is omitted. It is necessary to make the ending definite. The curtain line at the end of the play is just as important in radio as it is in the theatre.

It is also very essential to think through the basic ideas of plot and form—once these are decided, a great deal follows naturally. The first question is to do with the material’s suitability for the target audience, the second with its technical feasibility.

Assuming that the writer is starting from scratch and not adapting an existing play, he should be clear as to his broad intention—to make people laugh, to comment on or explain a contemporary situation, to convey a message, to tell a story, to entertain. How can he best enable the listener to ‘connect’ with his intention? Does he want him to identify with one of the characters? Should the basic situation be one with which the listener can easily relate?

The second point at this initial stage is to know whether the play has to be written within certain technical or cost limitations. To do something simple and well is preferable to failing with something complicated. There seems little point
in writing a play which calls for six sound effects turntables or CD players, echo, a 
variety of acoustics, distorted voice-over, and a crowd chanting specific lines of 
script, if the studio facilities are not able to meet these demands. Of course, with 
ingenuity even a simple studio can provide most if not all of these devices. But the 
most crucial factor is often simply a shortage of time. There may be limitations too 
in the capabilities of the talent available. The writer, for example, should beware 
creating a part which is emotionally-exceptionally demanding only to hear it 
inadequately performed. Writing for the amateur or child actor can be very rewarding 
in the surprises which their creative flowering may bring, but it can also be frustrating 
if we automatically transfer into the script the demands and standards of the 
professional stage.

Thus, the playwright must know at the outset how to tailor his play for the 
medium, what he is attempting to pour over, how he expects his audience to relate to 
the material, and whether what he wants is technically and financially possible. From 
here, there are three possible starting points—the story, the setting or the characters.

**Story Construction**

The simplest way of telling a story is to:

1. Explain the situation.
2. Introduce ‘conflict’.
3. Develop the action.
4. Resolve the conflict.

Of course, there may be complications and sub-plots but the essence of a 
good story is to want to find out ‘what happens in the end’. Who committed the 
crime? Were the lovers reunited? Did the cavalry arrive in time? The element which 
tends to interest us most is the resolution of conflict and since this comes towards 
the end, there should be no problem of maintaining interest once into the ‘rising 
action’ of the play. And at the end, it is not necessary to tie up all the loose ends—to
dot every ‘i’ and cross every ‘t’ in a neat and tidy conclusion. Life seldom works that way. It is often better to have something unsaid, leaving the listener still with a question, an issue, or a motivation to think about. Parables are stories which deliberately do not go straight from A to B, but take a parabolic route leaving the hearer to work out the implications of it all. This is one of the fascinations of the story form.

In radio, scenes can be shorter than in the theatre, and intercutting between different situations is a simple matter of keeping the listener informed about where he is at any one time. This ability to move quickly in terms of location should be used positively to achieve a variety and contrast which itself adds interest. The impact of a scene involving a group of fear-stricken people faced with impending disaster is heightened by its direct juxtaposition with another, but related, group unaware of the danger. If the rate of intercutting becomes progressively faster and the scenes shorter, the pace of the play increases. This sense of acceleration, or at least of movement, may be in the plot itself but a writer can inject greater excitement...
or tension simply in his handling of the scene length and in their relation to one another. Thus, the overall shape of the play may be a steady development of its progress, heightening and increasing. Or it may resolve around the stop-go tempo of successive components. Interest through contrast may be obtained by a variety of means, for example:


3. Change of place: indoors/open air, crowded/deserted, opulent/poverty stricken.

The radio play writer is concerned with images created by sound alone; if he wants colour and mood he must paint them with the words he uses and choose locations that are aurally evocative.

On a personal note to illustrate the impact of contrast within a play, recall may be had of a great moment from a drama on the life of Christ. The violence and anger of the crowd demanding his execution is progressively increased, the shouting grows more vehement. Then we hear the Roman soldiers, the hammering of nails and the agony of the crucifixion. Human clamour gives way to a deeper, darker sense of tragedy and doom. Christ’s last words are uttered, a crash of thunder through to a climax of discordant music gradually subsiding, quietening to silence. Then a pause is given. Then slowly the bird song is being heard.

How wrong it would have been to spoil that contrast by using the narrator, as elsewhere in the play.

The setting

Situation comedy drama often begins with a setting which then becomes animated with characters. The storyline comes later driven by the circumstances,
generally a series of predicaments in which the characters find themselves. Fortunately radio can provide almost any setting at will— a royal household in ancient Egypt, a space capsule journeying to a distant planet, or a ranch house in outback Australia. The setting, plus one or two of the principal characters, may be the key theme holding a series of plays— of advertisements— together. It is important that the time and place is well researched so that credibility is maintained for those listeners who are expert in the particular situation.

Within a play the setting can obviously vary considerably and one of the devices used to create interest is to have a strong contrast of locale in adjacent scenes, for example, to move from an opulent modern office peopled by senior managers to a struggling rural hospital affected by their decisions. Changes of location are very effective when run in parallel with changes in disposition or mood.

The Announcer or Narrator

The narrator’s introduction in some of the NPPs is decidedly important, for he must set the stage for the listener. He creates in the mind of the listener a setting in which the play is to be performed. He must not be too positive in his details, but should allow the listener an opportunity to visualize the scene as it appears to him. The narrator will tell something of the costumes if they are essential to the plot development (particularly if it is a period play). He creates the entire atmosphere by his introduction and by the music that accompanies his description. He should be chary in his delineation of character traits that will be brought out by the speech of the characters themselves.

The narrator will act as a verbal scene shifter as the play progresses, but must not dominate the play. Whenever possible, the lines spoken by characters should take the place of the interrupting narrator. Let us see how the narrator or नृत्यधर्म in the NPP कालप्रस्तर has created a setting in the mind of the listeners and has acted as a scene shifter just after the play begins with the theme music:

(पौराणिक समय को दर्शाता प्रारंभिक संगीत। गंधर्वों का चीणावादन शुरू होता है, साथ-साथ अन्यरूपों का नृत्य भी)
The beginning of the play, whether it is in the words of the narrator or of a character or in some other form of introduction, is of vital importance. During the first moments the listener decides whether he wishes to remain tuned to the station, and he should be put in the right mood to cooperate in the reception of the plot that is to follow. There are different means of attracting and holding the listener and of creating the desired atmosphere. The radio play, like that of the stage, may depend upon its overture to put the listener into the right frame of mind, to get tuned in or settled in his seat, or to attract an attention that is wandering over the dial. The author should consider his opening of vital importance and should write the beginning announcement or dialogue to attract and hold attention. The style, diction, and content should really introduce the play and create the necessary attitude or mood reaction in the listener. Some Hindi national plays may be effectively introduced by expressive sound in conjunction with speech, and, if the sounds are such as to bring pictures to the listener’s mind, suspense may be created through them. The
use of local colour in the opening dialogue—the language of the nature, of the birds, or of the sea creates an atmosphere that attracts the listener’s attention. In this case speech may be enforced by sound effects. When the play is written, it is necessary to go back and work over the opening until it is made certain that it will attract an audience and will create without fail the mood required for the appreciation of the play that is to follow. One last word of caution—the introduction must move swiftly so as not to take time that is necessary for plot development. While the immediate establishment of an atmosphere is advisable, it must not be offensive to the listener.

The beginning of the NPP has a definite job to fulfill. It sets forth the purpose of the play. It creates a picture. Characters, setting, and situation should be established immediately.

The successful play begins with extraordinary swiftness and with economy of words. Immediate attention can be obtained by a rapid development of the situation, promise of further development, powerful atmosphere, striking characterization, an intriguing unusual setting, or an extremely familiar setting. In general, listeners prefer introduction through dialogue.1

These principles have been observed by the NPP playwrights and the producers when the NPPs are produced and b’cast. As for example, let us cite here how the NPP कंक्राल was introduced to the listeners through dialogues just after playing the theme music when it was broadcast:

दीवान : (जरा फख के साथ) हिज हाइनेस द महाराजा ऑफ अंजनगौर !

महाराजा : बस बस, ठीक है। ये कौन हैं?

विजय : मेरा नाम विजय केतन मुखर्जी है।

दीवान : हमारे अंजनगौर स्टेट के लों एजरेंट।

महाराजा : अच्छा तो हमस्तिहो चो मुखर्जी ? बंगाली ?

विजय : येस योर एक्सल्पिस्ट !

Characterisation

Characterisation is a key ingredient of the NPPs and it is important to sketch out a pen portrait of each character. This helps to stabilise them as people and it is easier to give them convincing dialogue. The playwrights should specify:

* their age, sex, where they live and how they talk;
* height, weight, colouring, and general appearance;
* their social values, sense of status, beliefs;
* the car they drive, the clothes they like, how much money they have;
* the jokes they make – or not, how trusting they are, how perceptive;
* their moods, orientations, preferences and dislikes.

Characters have faults, they fall apart in crises; they will appear illogical because their words and their deeds won’t always coincide. They will reveal themselves in what they say, but even more in what they do. One of the necessary tensions in compelling drama is the inner conflict that exists in human beings—the inconsistencies between what he wants to do, what he ought to do, and what he actually does. Saints will have their failings and even the worst sinners may have their redeeming features under certain circumstances. Substantial characters convey real human complexity and the writer cannot accurately portray them until he knows

1. करंकाल : radio NPP script, P-1
them. When characterisation is fully in place the writer may let the characters almost write themselves since they know how they are likely to react to a set of events driven by the story. Writers and producers should tell actors as much as they can about the characters— their personality, typical behaviour, and disposition.

The playwright should write a play requiring a limited cast, for more than six voices of major characters are confusing to the listener since he cannot identify the characters by sight. Seldom should more than four individuals enter into a conversation, and they should have voice contrast or a vocabulary contrast to make them individualistic. If a character is given a personal speech style, it must be maintained throughout the entire script. While exaggeration is permitted in certain character types, the characterization must not be burlesqued. If the character is given a "sound" personality, the listener will create his own picture of the type, for he can visualize the character by what he says and how he says it. Characters in all radio dramas or NPPs should be made real to the listener. People like to listen to and follow the adventures of their own kind, or of those whom they can recognize on the radio. Not only does a character's manner of speech portray him to the unseeing listener; the writer of the script must also make each actor act in the way that the character is supposed to act in real life. Whenever possible it is advisable to give to a character some characteristic expression of words that identifies him. If one character is allowed to repeat certain phrases, then we should be careful not to overwork these phrases. One of the most common criticisms of the amateur radio script is that the character's lines are interchangeable. The listener should be able to tune in on the middle of a broadcast and tell from the words of a character whether दृष्टिकोण, वास्तविकता or व्याख्याति is speaking.

Of course, it is impossible, as in real life, to keep the principal characters talking with one another all the time; consequently minor characters may be introduced when they are necessary to forward development. Characters should not talk to themselves. Someone must intervene to make the action lifelike. However, we need not allow the minor character to become important; it is best not to name
him; merely identify his position. Various methods may be used to cut down the number of characters; among these is the use of the telephone, letter, or telegram. The last two should be short and important if read. Messages which help in explaining but which are not exciting in themselves may be summarized by the reader. Telephone conversations frequently save scene 'shifting, create atmosphere, and make situations clear. They are generally shorter than face-to-face conversation and thus speed up the play. Sometimes it is essential that the radio listener hear the speech at both ends of the telephone line, but since this is unnatural it should be avoided if possible.

(फोन की घंटी)
राजशेर्षन: येस, स्पीकिंग..... हैं, कल जानेवाला हूँ। नहीं, नहीं, समय नहीं है। अभी तो काफी लेट हो चुका है। ना.... ना.... आई ऑम वेरी हैप्पी। युवर फेस्टिवल वाँज वेरी सक्सेसफुल.... येस.... येस.... अगर समय मिले तो मैं जरूर आऊँगा। रसोर-रसोर, अच्छा .... जैसे मैंने कहा था .... कल सब्बेरे छ: बजे गाड़ी भेज देना ...... ओ. के. ..... बाय। (फोन रखते हैं) 1

Dialogue

Since the radio audience cannot see the actors, making the characters speak in character is vital. Emotions must be brought out to the listener, not by the shrugging of shoulders or by the lifting of eyebrows, but by words, sentence structure, and delivery. All emotions have to be conveyed through the air by speech; people under terrific emotional stress are likely to say little, to use short sentences or fragments.

The theatre audience can see the actor enter the scene, but when a radio character comes into the play he must be introduced by dialogue, "Well, here comes Harry now; let's ask him." This identification must be carried on throughout the play as characters enter and leave the scene. It is a wise policy for characters to be addressed by name in the dialogue. However, this must not be overdone. Not only does the dialogue introduce the character but it may describe some essential manner or condition of the person. For instance, "Who is that long-bearded old man coming

1. महीचिका: radio NPP script, P-4
down the road, the one with the tattered clothes who leans so heavily upon a cane?"
In this way, the dialogue appeals to the visual sense of the listeners and obviates the
necessity of a description of the characters by the narrator. In some instances the
dialogue may be used to set the stage as in "Goodness, Ruth, don't you delight in
this modern kitchen with all its chromium and porcelain? It is so bright and cheerful."

The playwright, like the director and like the audience, must forget his stage
and listen to his words as if he were blind. The characters are never seen but the
words they utter are vital. They should speak with a clearness and directness that
leave no uncertainty in the mind of the listener either as to their purpose in the play
or as to which character is speaking. Speeches must be much shorter in the radio
play than they are upon the stage because of the time limitation. There is no place
for the soliloquy. However, jerkiness must also be avoided. Every speech must carry
forward the action. It is not an easy task to write conversation, but it must be very
real, very human in the radio play. The speeches must be in harmony with the
characters who speak them. They should be written so that they can be understood
in the dark. When questions, exclamations, or whisperings are used, they must be
natural and realistic in their phraseology. On the stage the facial expression will
help in the understanding of certain lines, but radio dialogue must be more explicit.
The microphone emphasizes affectations; consequently diction must be so natural
that it sounds extemporaneous and casual, and yet it must not be slipshod.

The speech of the characters should portray the scene and the action as well
as the thought. All action must be talked about. It is better to say, "Why did you
come in the window when you could see that the door was open?" than to inquire,
"Why did you come in that way?" because the audience cannot see the entrance.
Stage business and sounds are explained by dialogue. It is wise for the writer to
allow the control operator to tell him how to instruct his actors in the matters of
entrances and exits in order that he may get the proper impressions of distance and
motion to appeal to his audience. As the same sound effects frequently may be used
to illustrate different sounds, the dialogue must bring out what the sound means;
otherwise the roar of royal tiger might sound to the listener like that of cloud-burst.

The sentence structure used in the radio dialogue should conform to the rules that have been laid down for all radio speech. Sentences should be short, simple, clear. The radio script must be actor-proof—written in such a way that it cannot be misinterpreted. We should not allow the entire plot to hinge upon a single line, because the listener's attention may be diverted during its delivery, with the result that he will lose the entire plot of the story. Of course, profanity, immodesty, the belittling of any race, and the use of poor grammar, except in cases where it is necessary to bring out character, are bad. Humor must not offend anybody who may be a patron of the sponsor of the program. The use of such descriptive nouns as "wop," "Chink," or "nigger" is absolutely forbidden. Even the sports announcer describing prize fight refrains from using the word "blood". Here is a final caution under the heading of dialogue: we should not allow the script to become too "talky." Radio characters should not be loquacious.

The speed of the radio play is constant. There can be no pauses of any length while actors ponder, none of the lighting of cigarettes so loved by the amateur, no quiet and thoughtful moving from one side of the stage to the other. The tempo of the radio play is fast. No episode can be padded with description. There must be a planned forward action. Any lag in a play is very quickly apprehended by a listener and must be tightened up in those loose spots. On the other hand, it may become staccato and hurried where leisure is desirable.

'Look out, he's got a gun'. Lines like this, unnecessary in film, television or theatre where the audience can see that he has a gun, are essential in radio as a means of conveying information. The difficulty is that such 'point' lines can so easily sound contrived and false. All speech must be the natural colloquial talk of the character by whom it is uttered. In reproducing a contemporary situation, a writer can do no better than to take his notebook to the market place, restaurant or party and observe what people actually say, and their manner of saying it. It is to be
listened carefully to the talk of shoppers, eavesdrop on their conversation in the train. It is the stuff of the reality. And amid the talk, silence can be used to heighten a sense of tension or expectation. Overlapping voices convey anger, passion, excitement or crisis. Not only do radio characters say what they are doing, but people reveal their inner thoughts by helpfully thinking aloud, or saying their words as they write a letter. These are devices for the medium and should be used with subtlety if the result is to feel true to life.

Producers should beware writers who preface a scene with stage directions: ‘The scene is set in a lonely castle in the Scottish Highlands. A fire is roaring in the grate. Outside a storm is brewing. The Laird and his visitor enter.’

Such ‘picture setting’ designed for the reader rather than the listener should be crossed out and the dialogue considered in isolation. If the words themselves create the same scene, the directions are superfluous; if not, the dialogue is faulty:

Laird: (Approaching) come in, come in. It looks a storm is on the way.

Visitor: (approaching) Thank you. I’m afraid you’re right. It was starting to rain on the last few miles of my journey.

Laird: Well come and warm yourself by the fire; we don’t get many visitors.

Visitor: You are a bit off the beaten track, but since I was in the Highlands and’ve always been fascinated by castles I thought I would call in – I hope you don’t mind.

Laird: Not at all, I get a bit lonely my myself.

Visitor: (Rubbing hands) Ah, that’s better. This is a lovely room – is this oak panelling as old as it looks? etc.etc.

The producer is able to add considerably to such a scene in its casting, in the voices used – for example, in the age and accents of the two characters, and whether the mood is jovial or sinister.
In addition to visual information, character and plot, the dialogue must remind us from time to time of who is speaking to whom. Anyone ‘present’ must either be given a line or be referred to, so that they can be included in the listener’s mental picture. For example, such dialogues from NPP अनान्यवाच्चे are cited below:

देवनाट: चुप रह ढूंढायण !

ढूंढायण: आज चुप नहीं रहीगा देवनाट ! (व्यंग्य से) क्यों, राज्यासन के बिना ही राज चलाने की लालसा है। कहीं सच्चा उत्तराधिकारी न आ जाये, इसका तो डर नहीं ?

देवनाट: (प्रसन्न हुए) भीष्म को डर। वो भ्रष्टा है, अंत में तो राज्य की रक्षा हेतु हस्तिनापुर के सिंहासन से जुड़ा हूं, मुझे राज्य की धुरी संभालनी है। ¹

The use of names within the dialogue is particularly important at the beginning of the scene.

Characters should also refer to the situation not within the immediate picture so that the listener’s imagination is equipped with all the relevant information. To justify this point, we may quote dialogues from the NPP रेडियो, an original Oriya - cum - translated Radio play (Hindi version) depicting injustice caused to the women in our society. The heroine of the play डिसार्नी makes the situation clear to the listeners of the play. Thus –

डिसार्नी: (रोना बन्द करके क्रोध से) नींदकी नहीं कर रही हूं मैं। मेरे मर्द को मेरे दस दिन भी नहीं हुए, तू मुझे धक्का मारनेवाला कौन होता है ? मैं तैरी औरत हूं या तो जब भई की ? तुम्हे मुझे मारा तो बैठे ने मुझे मारा ..... और मारूँगा ..... बाया :

डिसार्नी: मेरे मर्द की दीलत लूटकर खानेवाले मक्कार लोग हो तुम। तुम होते कौन हो ?

पुजारी: बस बस ...... हो गया ...... और मत चिल्ला ...... बस कर ...... मर्द की दसवीं के दिन औरत का इस तरह चिल्लाना ठीक नहीं है। बस कर जो हो गया सो हो गया ...... चुप हो जा ..... बाया:

डिसार्नी: क्यों चुप हो जाओ ? क्यों ? मर्द मेरे पक्ष भी नहीं बीता था, कि इस बाया ने बैठे के साथ

¹. अनान्यवाच्चे: radio NPP script, P-8
An obvious point which the writer does not forget is that radio is not only blind, but unless the drama is in stereo, it is half deaf as well. Movement and distance have to be indicated, either in the acoustic or other production technique, or in the dialogue. Here are three examples:

(off mic) I think I’ve found it, come over here.

Look, there they are – down there on the beach. They must be half a mile away by now.

(softly) I’ve often thought of it like this – really close to you.

We shall return later to the question of creating the effects of perspective in the studio.

To achieve a flow to the play, consecutive scenes can be made to link one into the other. The dialogue at the end of one scene points forward to the next:

Voice 1: Well, I’ll see you on Friday - and remember to bring the stuff with you.

Voice 2: Don’t worry, I’ll be there.

Voice 1: Down by the river then, at 8 o’clock - and mind you’re not late.

If this is then followed by the sound of water, we can assume that the action has moved forward to the Friday and that we are down by the river. The actual scene-change is moved often through a fade-out of the last line – a line incidentally, like the second half of the one in this last example, words we can afford to miss. There is a moment’s pause, and a fade out on the first line of the new scene. Other methods are by direct cutting without fades, or possibly through a music link. The use of a

1. रेडियो: radio NPP script, P-7-8
narrator will almost always overcome difficulties of transition so long as the script avoids cliches of the ‘meanwhile, back at the ranch’ type.

A narrator is particularly useful in explaining a large amount of background information which might be unduly tedious in conversational form or where considerable compressions have to be made, for example, in adapting a novel as a radio play. In these circumstances the narrator can be used to help preserve the style and flavour of the original, especially in those parts which have a good deal of exposition and description but little action. Thus, as for example, from the NPP टेडियोप्ले, the narrator’s role in explaining the background of the play alongwith the environment is cited below:

(Pारंपरिक संगीत | सांध्यकालीन वातावरण | पार्क की चहल-पहल)

वाचक: नमस्कार। आज हम आपको ले जाते हैं शहर के प्राचीन और प्रमुख विकटोरिया पार्क में। दिन बढ़ते लगा है। इस वक्त रिसायर्ड, बुड़े लोग पार्क में लगी बैठानी पर आकर बैठे लगे हैं। ये लोग प्रायः अपनी जिन्दगी की खदी मीठी यादें, आपबीती कहानियाँ एक-दूसरे को सुनाया करते हैं। और इस तरह अपना जी हल्का करते हैं। ये बुड़े व्यक्ति कभी खिलखिलाकर हंसते हैं तो कभी गुरु गंभीर मुंह लिये सुनाने बाले की तरफ ताकने लगते हैं।

When in doubt, the experienced playwright will almost certainly follow the simplest course remembering that the listener will appreciate most what he can readily understand.

Script layout and the Manuscript

Following the normal standard of scripts intended for broadcast use, the page should be typed on one side only to minimise handling noise, the paper being of a firm ‘non-rustle’ type. The lines should be double spaced to allow room for alterations and actors’ notes, and each speech numbered for easy reference. Directions, or details of sound effects and music, should be bracketed, underlined, or in capitals so that they stand out clearly from the dialogue. The reproduction of

1. टेडियोप्ले: radio NPP script, P-1
scripts should be absolutely clear and there should be plenty of copies so that spares are available.

An example of page layout is shown below:

1. (INDOOR ACOUSTIC)
2. BRADY: Why isn’t Harris here yet? - You people at the Foreign Office seem to think everyone has got time to waste.
3. SALMON: I don’t know, Colonel, it’s not like him to be late.
4. BRADY: Well it’s damned inconsiderate. I’ve a good mind to...
5. FX: KNOCK AT DOOR
6. SALMON: (RELIEVED) That’s probably him. (GOINT OFF) I’ll let him in.
7. FX: DOOR OPENS OFF
8. HARRIS: (OFF) Hello, John.
9. SALMON: (OFF) Thank goodness you’ve arrived. We’ve been waiting some time. (APPROACH) Colonel Brady I don’t think you’ve met Nigel Harris. He’s our representative...
10. BRADY: (INTERRUPTING) I know perfectly well who he is, what I want to know is where he’s been.
11. HARRIS: Well, I’ve been trying to get us out of trouble. It’s bad news I’m afraid. The money we had ready for the deal has gone and Holden has disappeared.
12. BRADY: This is preposterous! Are you suggesting he’s taken it?
13. HARRIS: I'm not suggesting anything, Colonel, but we know that last night he was at Victoria Station, and bought a ticket for Marseilles.

14. SALMON: Marseilles? By train?

15. HARRIS: By train. At this moment I should think he, and the money, are half-way across Europe.

16. FX: TRAIN WHISTLE APPROACH AND ROAR OF TRAIN PASSING.

17. FX: CROSSFADE TO INTERIOR TRAIN RHYTHM CONTINUES UNDERNEATH.

18. STEWARD: (APPROACHING) Take your last sitting for lunch please.

(CLOSER) Last sitting for lunch. Merci, Madame.

1. FX: COMPARTMENT DOOR SLIDES OPEN

2. STEWARD: (CLOSE) Last sitting for lunch, Sir. Excusez moi, Monsieur, - will you be wanting lunch? Monsieur?

(TO SELF) C'est formidable. Quite a sleeper.

(LOUDER) Excuse me Sir, - Allow me to remove the newspaper.

3. FX: PAPER RUSTLE

4. STEWARD: Will you be.... (GASP) Oh .... Terrible.... Terrible.

5. FX: TRAIN NOISE PASSING AND FADES INTO DISTANCE.

6. FX: PHONE RINGS. RECEIVER PICKED UP. RINGING STOPS.

7. BRADY: Hello.

8. VOICE: (DISTORT) Is that Colonel Brady?
9. BRADY: Yes. Who’s that?

10. VOICE: (DISTORT) It doesn’t matter but I thought you ought to know he’s dead.

11. BRADY: Who’s dead? Who is this?

12. VOICE: (DISTORT) Oh you know who’s dead all right, - and I’ve got the money.

13. BRADY: You’ve got what money? Who are you?

14. VOICE: You’ll know soon enough. I’ll be in touch...

15. FX: TELEPHONE CLICK. DIALLING TONE.

16. BRADY: Hello, hello ... oh blast it.

17. FX: RECEIVER SLAMMED DOWN.

18. FX: OFFICE INTERCOM BUZZER

19. SECRETARY: (DISTORT) Yes, Sir?

20. BRADY: Joan, I want you to get hold of Salmon and Harris - can you do that?

21. SECRETARY: (DISTORT) Yes, Sir - they went back to the Foreign Office.

22. BRADY: Well I want them - at once. And get me on tonight’s plane, - to Marseilles.

23. CD: MUSIC TO END.

The Manuscript

The radio script should be double spaced. It is best to place the name of the character delivering a speech in the center of the line above the speech he delivers. If the character’s name is placed in front of the line, there is a possibility that it may be read by him. Copies of the script must be provided for each character, the director,
the sound-effects man, the musical director, and the control operator. In case the script is one of a series to be presented, the number of the script in the series and the date upon which it is to be given should be included in the manuscript. If possible, it is also wise to list the rehearsal dates and hours.

The playwright lists the cast, giving some descriptive material about each characterization - types, ages, voices, and personality.

**Act-I, Scene-I**

Phineas (Union guard, around 40, given to airs; fancies himself as an actor and shrewd fellow)

Old Jesse (groom, Yankee, garrulous, given to religious philosophizing).

James Winter (Confederate spy, young, bitter humor, courageous).

Colonel (Yankee, elderly, formal manner).

Chaplain (Yankee, prayer-book murmur).

It is also good practice at the beginning of the script to list all the sound effects that will be required according to the scenes and acts. The use of adjectives or adverbs to qualify the sound cue should necessarily be avoided unless such adjectives give instruction as to volume or pace.

**Sound Effects**

- Jingle of harness
- Marching effects
- Whinny and pawing of horse

- Slow steps on wooden platform
- Squeak of pulley
- Slow drum beat

The titles of music to be used in the introduction, close, and scene transitions should also be given, or a space left in which the musical director can fill in this information. Such listing will be helpful to the casting director, the sound-effects man, and the musical director.
EDDIE: Well, you’ve got the idea, then. All right. The first sound we hear is
an automobile. The camera swings around, and catches this car— a big, powerful
looking roadster — as it swings into the driveway. *(Start fading in music as
background - something “mysterious.” preferably.)* We see the headlights cut
across the house. Then the car stops in front of the doorway; a young man climbs
out and knocks on the door. He waits a few moments, and then—(Music fades up and
out rapidly.)

Whenever necessary the playwright should give in the body of the script the
intonation to be used by the character in the presentation of his part, the inflection,
voice changes, and attitude.

EDDIE: *(with an air of finality)* Well, that’s that. It’s terrible, then. *(There is
a slight pause)*

MARIAN: What’s the matter? Don’t you feel like talking?

EDDIE: *(mock indignation)* Why, Marian! How can you say such a thing?
Me? Not talk?

Also in the body of the script it is necessary to show where sound effects are
to be used and which sound effects are to be used.

JUDGE JAY: This court stands adjourned until high noon tomorrow.

*(Gavel - crowd noises)*

If, in the opinion of the playwright, it is necessary for characters to emphasize
certain words, these words may be underlined. The use of dashes as punctuation
helps the actor, giving him an opportunity to characterize his part and make full use
of the pauses. When there is a scene transition, the musical selection to be used in
that transition should be listed by name.

**Adaptations**

It is generally felt that adapting a stage play or bit of literature is the easiest
way of obtaining radio material. This belief is based upon the fact that so much of the better radio-show material is adapted from play, novels, short stories, or pictures. The broadcasts of the Lux Radio Theater, Campbell Playhouse, Columbia Workshop, and Great Plays often feature adaptations. Furthermore, the unimaginative writer feels that such a procedure eliminates the difficulties of creating plot and characterization. Adapting eliminates the difficulties of creation; however, the technical difficulties are by no means decreased, for making a good adaptation in reality requires more technical skill than writing an original skit.

The problems of adapting plays and pictures are probably the least difficult, since the original material is already in the form of drama. Two things are necessary: conformity to the usual time limitations of radio, and the removal of the dependence on the visual. These visual aids and stage business, if they are essential, must be translated into dialogue for the benefit of the radio audience. A good test of this requirement may be made by closing the eyes during a motion picture and trying to create in the imagination the scene of the screen, using as a basis only the sound. Conforming to time is another problem. One-act plays lend themselves more readily to adaptation because playing time already approximates radio time units. Condensation of the longer plays requires more than the cutting of speeches and scenes. In many cases it requires a rearrangement in order to strengthen narrative structure, it requires the combination of characters in order to eliminate confusion, and it requires the simplification of plot and the speeding up of the tempo.

The adapting of stories is a problem somewhat more difficult than that of adapting plays. Here more creative ability is needed because stories often contain very little dialogue and much description. The adaptor deserves almost as much credit as the author because he has so much work to do in translating the story into radio requirements. He will probably need to simplify the plot and eliminate or unravel subplots. This is more likely to be true of the novel than of the short story. New dialogue may have to be invented to take care of essential description, or sound effects may need to be employed to give descriptive effect. Conformation in
the matter of time is again more easily accomplished in the shorter story; in fact, the novel is often best presented as a serial. And, finally, as is the case with plays, stories will need to be consolidated and compressed. Almost all forms of writing lend themselves to adaptation but it must be remembered that only one sense is appealed to by radio; there is no aid from the visual, and neither is there any opportunity to check back and clear up any misunderstanding.

It should also be noted that the adaptation of comparatively recent material requires a copyright release from the original author or his agent. Seldom does a magazine or publisher grant such rights. In many cases the author has retained his radio rights and he must be contacted - and usually he is difficult to locate.

Length

The NPP like any radio play must be timed exactly so that the tempo can be maintained and the actors will not have to speed up or slow down at the end. Radio plays are heard most frequently upon 15 and 30 minute programmes; approximately two-thirds of the programme period is the most that can be devoted to the script. The balance of the time is taken up by commercials, the announcement of the narrator, musical transitions, etc. Probably the script will be cut during the rehearsal to its correct time limit. Much will depend upon the rate of speech of the actors. A too-long script is preferred. It is easier to cut than to pad a script.

The actors

Casting a radio drama, whether it is a one hour play like that of NPPs or a short illustration, will nearly always end by being a compromise between who is suitable and who is available. Naturally, the producer will want the best performers but this is not always possible within the constraints of money. It is also difficult to assemble an ideal cast at one place, and possibly several times, for rehearsal and recording, and this to coincide with the availability of studio space. Again, it may be that two excellent players are available, but their voices are too similar to be used in the same piece. So, there are several factors which will determine the final cast.
Actors new to radio have to recognise the limitations of the printed page, which is designed to place words in clearly readable lines. It cannot overlay words in the same way that voices can, and do:

Voice one: The cost of this project is going to be 3 or 4 million - and that's big money by anyone's reckoning.

Voice two: But that's rubbish, why I could do the job for...

Voice one: (Interrupting) Don't tell me it's rubbish, anyway that's the figure and it's going ahead.

Although this is what might appear on the page, voice two is clearly going to react to the cost of the project immediately on hearing the figures—half way through voice one's first line. The script writer may insert at that point (react or intake of breath) but generally it is best left to the imagination of the actor. Actors sometimes need to be persuaded to act, and not to become too script-bound. Then voice one interrupts. This does not mean that he waits until voice two has finished his previous line before starting with the "Don't tell me...." He starts well before voice two breaks off, say on the word 'could'. The two voices will overlay each other for a few words thereby sounding more natural.

On the matter of voice projection, the normal speaking range over a conversational distance will suffice—intimate and confidential, to angry and hysterical: As the apparent distance is increased, so the projection also increases. In the following example, the actor goes over to the door and ends the line with more projection than he was using at the start. The voice gradually rises in pitch throughout the speech.

Voice: Well I must go. (DEPARTS) I shalln't be long but there are several things I must do. (DOOR OPENS, OFF) I'll be back as soon as I can. Goodbye. (DOOR SHUTS).

In moving to the 'dead' side of the microphone, the actor's actual movement may have been no more than a metre. The aural impression given may be a retreat of
at least five metres. It is important that such ‘moves’ are made only during spoken
dialogue otherwise the actor will appear to have ‘jumped’ from a near to a distant
position. Of course, moving off-mic, which increases the ratio of reflection to
direct sound, can only serve to give an impression of distance in an interior scene.

When the setting is in the open air, there is no reflected sound and distance
has to be achieved by a combination of the actor’s higher voice-projection and the
small volume derived from a low setting of the microphone channel fader. By this
means it is possible to have a character shouting to us from ‘over there’, having a
conversation with another person ‘in the foreground’ who is shouting back. Such a

![Fig. 1.2. Movement on mic. The shaded circles are the normal areas of pick-up on both sides of a bi­
directional microphone. An actor ‘approaching’ says his lines as he moves from the dead side to the live
side, reducing his voice projection as he does so. Effective for indoor scenes.](image)

scene requires considerable manipulation of the microphone fader with no overlay
of the voices. A preferred alternative is to have the actors in separate rooms, each
with his own microphone and with a headphone feed of the mixed output.

**The acoustic**

In any discussion of monophonic perspective, distance is a function which
separates characters in the sense of being near or far. The producer must always
know where the listener is placed relatives to the overall picture. Generally, but not
necessarily, ‘with’ the microphone, the listener placed in a busily dynamic scene
will need some information which distinguishes his following the action by moving
through the scene, from his simply watching it from a static position.
Part of this distinction may be in the use of an acoustic which itself changes. Accompanied by the appropriate sound effects a move out of a reverberant courtroom into a small ante-room, or from the street into a telephone box, can be highly effective. There are four basic acoustics comprising the combinations of the quantity, and duration of the reflected sound:

(1) No reverberation  Outdoor  Created by fully absorbent 'dead' studio.

(2) Little reverberation  Library or large well furnished room  Bright acoustic or a little reverberation added to normal studio.

but long reverberation time

(3) Much reverberation  Telephone box, bathroom  Small enclosed space of reflective surfaces - 'boxy' acoustic.

but short reverberation time

(4) Much reverberation and long reverberation time  Cave, 'Royal Palace', concert hall  Artificial echo added to normal studio output

Frequency discrimination applied to the output of the echo device will add the distinctive coloration of a particular acoustic. The characteristic of a normal drama studio with a 'neutral' acoustic would limit the reverberation time to about 0.2 seconds. Associated with this would be a 'bright' area with a reverberation time of, say 0.6 seconds, and a separate cubicle for a narrator. The key factor is flexibility so that by using screens, curains and carpet, a variety of acoustic environments may be produced.

The use of tie-clip mics for actors avoids any pick-up of studio acoustic and allows considerable freedom of movement. Crossfading between a studio mic and tie-clip mic with a suitable drop in vocal projection provides a very credible 'think piece' in the middle of dialogue.
Sound effect

When the curtain rises on a theatre stage the scenery is immediately obvious and the audience is given all the contextual information it requires for the play to start. So it is with radio, except that to achieve an unambiguous impact the sounds must be refined and simplified to those few which really carry the message. The equivalent of the theatre’s ‘backdrop’ are those sounds which run throughout a scene – for example rain, conversation at a party, traffic noise or the sounds of battle. These are most likely to be pre-recorded and reproduced from records, compact disc, cart or tape. The ‘incidental furniture’ and ‘props’ are those effects which are specially placed to suit the action—for instance dialling a telephone, pouring a drink, closing a door or firing a gun. Such sounds are best made in the studio at the time of the appropriate dialogue, if possible by the actors themselves—for example, lighting a cigarette or taking a drink— but by someone else if hands are not free due to their holding a script.

The temptation for producer new to drama is to use too many effects. While it is true that in the real world the sounds we hear are many and complex, radio drama in this respect purveys not what is real but what is understandable. It is possible to record genuine sounds which divorced from their visual reality convey nothing at all. The sound of a modern car drawing up has very little impact, yet it may be required to carry the dramatic turning point of the play. In the search for clear associations between situation and sound, radio over the years has developed conventions with generally understood meanings. The urgently stopping car virtually demands a screech of tyres, slamming doors and running footsteps. It becomes a little larger than life. Overdone, and it becomes comical.

Some other sounds which have become immediately understood are:

(1) Passage of time- clock ticking
(2) Night time - owl hooting.
(3) On the coast - scagulls and seawash.
(4) On board sailing ship - creaking of ropes.

(5) Early morning - cock crowing.

(6) Out of doors, rural - birdsong.

The convention for normal movement is to do without footsteps. These are only used to underline a specific dramatic point.

Background sounds may or may not be audible to the actors in the studio, depending on the technical facilities available. It is important, however, for actors to know what they are up against, and any background sounds should be played over to them to help them visualise the scene and judge their level of projection. This is particularly important if the sounds are noisy – the cockpit of a light aircraft, a fairground or battle. If an actor has to react to a sound reproduced from a record or tape he will require a feed of the output either to his headphones or through a loudspeaker. The normal studio speaker is, of course, cut when any mic channel is opened, but an additional loudspeaker fed from the grams, CD and tape sources can remain on, unaffected by this muting. This facility is called foldback, and has the advantage not only that the cast can hear the effects, even though their own mics are live, but that any sounds reproduced in this way and picked up on the studio microphones will share the same acoustic as the actor’s voices. Producers working in drama will soon establish their own methods of manufacturing studio sounds. The following are some which have saved endless time and trouble:

(1) Walking through undergrowth or jungle – a bundle of recording tape rustled in the hands.

(2) Walking through snow – a roll of cotton wool squeezed and twisted in the hands, or two blocks of salt rubbed together.

(3) Horses’ hooves – halved coconut shells are still the best from pawing the ground to a full gallop. They take practice though. A bunch of keys will produce the jingle of harness.
(4) Pouring a drink – put a little water into the glass first so that the sound starts immediately the pouring begins.

(5) Opening champagne – any good sound assistant ought to be able to make a convincing ‘pop’ with their mouth, otherwise blow a cork from a sawn-off bicycle pump. A little water poured on the Alka-Seltzer tables or fruit salts close on mic should do the rest.

(6) A building on fire – cellophane from a cigarette packet rustled on-mic plus the breaking of small sticks.

(7) Marching troops – a marching box is simply a cardboard box approximately 20 × 10 × 5 cm, containing some small gravel, held between the hands and shaken with precision it can execute drill movements to order.

(8) Creaks – rusty bolts, chains or other hardware are worth saving for the appropriate aural occasion. A little resin put on a cloth and pulled tightly along a piece of string fastened to a resonator is worth trying.

(9) In the case of a costume drama-some silk or taffeta material rustled near the mic occasionally is a great help in suggesting movement.

The essential characteristic for all electronic or acoustic sound-making devices is that they should be simple, reliable and consistent. And if the precise effect cannot be achieved, it is worth remembering that by recording a sound and playing it back at a different speed, it can be altered in ‘size’ or made unrelatable to the known world. Hence, the fantasy sounds varying from dinosaurs to outer space. Voices too can be made ‘unhuman’ by the use of a digital effects unit or ‘harmoniser’. Unlike the recorded tape method a voice can be made lighter or deeper without affecting its speed of delivery. Time spent exploring the possibilities of digital effects will pay dividends for the drama producer.

In making a plea for authenticity and accuracy, it is worth noting that such attention to detail saves considerable letter-writing to those among the audience who are only too ready to display their knowledge. Someone will know that the
firing of the type of shot used in the American War of Independence had an altogether characteristic sound, of course, certain planes used in the Australian Flying Doctor services had three engines not four, and whoever heard of an English cockoo in February! The producer must either avoid being too explicit, or he must be right.

**Music**

An ally to the resourceful producer, music can add greatly to the *radio* play. However, if it is over-used or badly chosen, it becomes only an irritating distraction. The producer must decide in which of its various roles music is to be used:

1. **As a ‘leitmotif’ to create an overall style.** Opening and closing music plus its use within the play as links between some of the scenes will provide thematic continuity. The extracts are likely to be the same piece of music, or different passages from the same work, throughout.

2. **Music chosen simply to create mood and establish the atmosphere of a scene.** Whether it is ‘haunted house’ music or ‘a day at the races’, music should be chosen that is not so familiar that it arouses in the listener his own preconceived ideas and associations. In this respect it pays the producer to cultivate an awareness of the lesser known works in his library.

3. **Reiterative or relentless music can be used to mark the passage of time,** thus heightening the sense of passing hours, or seconds. Weariness or monotony is economically reinforced.

In using music to be deliberately evocative of a particular time and place, the producer must be sure of his research. Songs of the First World War, or ballads of Elizabethan England—there is sure to be at least one expert listening ready to point out errors of instrumentation, words or date. To use a piano to set the mood of a time when there was only the harpsichord and virginals is to invite criticism.

The drama producer must not only search the shelves of the music library but should sometimes consider the use of specially written material. This need not be unduly ambitious or costly— a simple recurring folk song, or theme played on a
guitar or harmonica can be highly effective. There are considerable advantages designing the musical style to suit the play, and having the music durations to fit the various introductions and voice-overs.

Production technique

Producers will devise their own methods and different plays may demand an individual approach, as will working with children or amateurs as opposed to professional actors. However, the following is a practical outline of general procedure:

(1) The producer works with the writer, or on the script alone re-writing for the medium, and making alterations to suit the transmission time available.

(2) He casts the play, issues contracts, distributes copies of the script, arranges rehearsal or recording times.

(3) He, or his team, assembles the sound effects, books the studio, arranges for any special technical facilities or acoustic requirements, and chooses the music.

(4) The cast meets, not necessarily in the studio, for a read through. Awkward wordings may be altered to suit individual actors. The producer gives points of direction on the overall structure and shape of the play and the range of emotion required. This is to give everyone a general impression of the piece. Scripts are marked with additional information such as the use of cue lights.

(5) In the studio, scenes are rehearsed on-mic, with detailed production points concerning inflection, pauses, pace, movement, etc. The producer should be careful not to cause resentment by ‘over-direction’, particularly of professional actors. The producer may by all means say what effect he thinks a particular line should achieve. He can however undermine an actor if he goes as far as telling him precisely how it should be delivered. Sound effects, pre-recorded or live in the studio are added. The producer’s main task is to
encourage the actors and to listen carefully for any additional help they may need or for any blemish that should be eradicated.

(6) As each scene is polished to its required perfection, a recording ‘take’ is made. Are the pictures conjured up at the original reading of the script being brought to life? Is the atmosphere, content and technical quality exactly right? Necessary retakes are made and the script marked accordingly.

(7) The tape is edited using the best ‘takes’, removing fluffs and confirming the final duration.

(8) The programme is placed in the transmission system and the remaining paperwork completed.

However, there may be many variations on the pattern of working. Here are three alternative approaches:

1) The first one is to do away with the studio. If the play is suitable, then for example, the recording can be made out of doors among the back alleys and railway tracks of the city to have a different variety in radio plays.

2) There is no need to think only in terms of the conventional play. A highly effective yet simple format is to use a narrator as the main storyteller with only the important action dialogue spoken by other voices. Few but vivid effects complement this radio equivalent of the strip cartoon – excellent as a children’s serial.

3) Dialogue on its own can be a simple and powerful means of explaining a point – two farmers discussing a new technique for soil improvement – or illustrating a relationship, such as, a father and daughter arguing about what she should wear. Given the right people it doesn’t even have to be scripted – give them the basic idea and let them ad-lib it.

A producer finding his way into the drama field is well advised to listen to as
many radio plays and serials as possible. He will gather ideas and recognise the value of good words simply spoken.

In realising the printed page into an aural impression, he must not expect that the visual images in his mind at the start will be exactly translated into the end result. Actors are not puppets to be manipulated at will, they too are creative people and will want to make their own individual contribution. The finished play is an amalgam of many skills and talents, it is a 'hand-made', 'one-off' product which hopefully represents a richer experience than was envisaged by any one person at the outset.

It is found in the present study that all most all the principles of radio drama are found to be present in the NPPs broadcast during the period: 1990-2000. It may, however, be admitted that the application of the principles of radio drama in those NPPs were different and used in varied ways and styles depending on the nature of themes presented and objects to be achieved by the playwrights. Depending on the nature and kinds of NPPs, their historical, social and political background, regional variations in the language of original plays and environment, the playwrights and the adaptors had applied different techniques, embraced different styles and principles while preparing the scripts ready for production and broadcast. Accordingly, the dialogues used in those NPPs became different, the music and sound effects were not similar. Even the beginning of those NPPs were different. While one began with a Sutradhar establishing the background of the play and creating the setting in minds of the listeners, the other began directly with dialogues after the theme music was played.

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